DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 460 758 PS 026 895

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TITLE	A Tribe Apart: A Journey into the Heart of American Adolescence.
ISBN	ISBN-0-345-43594-X
PUB DATE	1998-00-00
NOTE	391p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Random House Distribution Center, 400 Hahn Rd., Westminster, MD 21157 ($14). Tel: 800-733-3000 (Toll Free); Web site: http://www.randomhouse.com.
PUB TYPE	Books (010) -- Reports - Research (143)
EDRS PRICE	Document Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	*Adolescent Behavior; *Adolescent Development; *Adolescents; Case Studies; High School Students; High Schools; Middle School Students; Middle Schools; Parent Attitudes; *Parent Child Relationship; Peer Groups; Peer Influence; *Peer Relationship; Qualitative Research; Self Concept; Sexuality; Student Attitudes; Student Behavior; Student School Relationship
IDENTIFIERS	Risk Factors

ABSTRACT

Noting that half of America's adolescents are at risk for serious problems such as substance abuse, accident-prone lifestyles, and delinquent behavior, this book explores the world of adolescents through the study of eight middle-school and high-school students from Reston, Virginia. These eight teenagers were selected based on gender, ethnicity, and family status. Four of the teens came from intact families, two from single-parent families, and two from stepfamilies. The story of each character is chronological, covering the years from 1992 and 1995, although the book's chapters are not necessarily sequential within that time frame. Part One of the book, "Stepping Inside," explores the world of school from the adolescents' perspective, and introduces the main characters. Chapters in this section include: (1) "On the Brink"; (2) "Speaking Out/Acting Out"; and "Honor and Other Relative Things." Part Two, "Making Contact," exposes a different focus of each youngster's life through conversations with the adolescents. Chapters in this section include: (1) "Out of the Whirlwind and on to the Playing Field"; (2) "A Circle of Friends: It's Not Peer Pressure, It's the Adolescent Way of Life"; and (3) "Sex: Let's Get It Out of the Way, but Don't Look at Me Naked." Part Three, "Making Sense," reveals how the adolescents try to make sense of their lives. Chapters in this section include: (1) "Rearrange Your Room when You Can't Arrange Yourself"; (2) "The Dilemmas of a Fourteen-Year-Old Girl: Contradictions as a Way of Life"; and (3) "Broken Promises: Theirs and Ours." The book concludes that adolescents need adults in their lives to serve as role models; they need the watchful eyes and the community standards that provide greater stability; and they need appreciation for who they are. (LPP)

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